

REMARKS

Independent claims 1, 21, and 25 have been amended.

Each of claims 1 and 21 has been amended by replacing the transitional term “comprising” that precedes the listed recited features of the indicated catalyst with the transitional phrase “consisting essentially of.” This phrase has a well understood meaning within the case law.

Claim 27 has been amended to explicitly recite a step for removing sulfur dioxide formed by the oxidation reaction of the contacting step from the product of such step by one of several recited means. This claim of a two-step process is similar to claim 1 of the corresponding granted European patent, EP 1 581 601 B1.

Considering the factual findings and analysis presented in the decision of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the above amendments made to the independent claims of this application place claims 1-2, 9, 11-21, 24-26, 30, and 33-44 in a condition for allowance. Therefore, early allowance of these claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

CAROLUS M. A. M. MESTERS and
RONALD J. SCHOONEBEEK

By /Charles W. Stewart/
Attorney, Charles W. Stewart
Registration No. 34,023
(713) 241-0360

P.O. Box 2463
Houston, Texas 77252-2463